

The Portuguese Sonnets.

In the new edition of Mrs. Browning's "Sonnets" Mr. Gosse tells us that: During the months of their brief courtship, closing, as all the world knows, in the clandestine flight and romantic wedding of Sept. 12, 1846, neither poet showed any verses to the other. Mr. Browning, in particular, had not the smallest notion that the circumstances of their betrothal had led Miss Barrett into any artistic expression of feeling. As little did he suspect it during their honeymoon in Paris, or during their first crowded weeks in Italy. They settled, at length, in Pisa, and, being quitted by Mrs. Jamieson and her niece in a very calm and happy mood, the young couple took up each his or her separate work. Their custom was, Mr. Browning said, to write alone, and not to show each other what they had written. This was a rule which he sometimes broke through, but she never. He had the habit of working in a downstairs room, where their meals were spread, while Mrs. Browning studied in a room on the floor above. One day, early in 1847, their breakfast being over, Mrs. Browning went upstairs while her husband stood at the window watching the street till the table should be cleared. He was presently aware of some one behind him, although the servant was gone. It was Mrs. Browning, who held him by the shoulder to prevent his turning to look at her, and at the same time pushed a packet of papers into the pocket of his coat. She told him to read that, and to tear it up if he did not like it; and then she fled to her own room. Mr. Browning settled himself at the table, and unfolded the parcel. It contained the series of sonnets which have now become so illustrious. As he read his emotion and delight may be conceived. Before he had finished it was impossible for him to restrain himself, and, regardless of his promise, he rushed upstairs and stormed the guarded citadel. He was early conscious that these were treasures not to be kept from the world. "I dared not reserve to myself," he said, "the finest sonnets written in any language since Shakespeare's." When it was determined to publish the sonnets in the volumes of 1850, the question of a title arose. The name which was ultimately chosen, "Sonnets from the Portuguese," was invented by Mr. Browning, as an ingenious device to veil the true authorship, and yet to suggest kinship with that beautiful lyric, called "Caterina to Camoens," in which so similar a passion had been expressed. Long before he ever heard of these poems, Mr. Browning called his wife his "own little Portuguese," and so, when she proposed "Sonnets Translated from the Bosnian," he, catching at the happy thought of "Translated," replied, "No, not Bosnian—that means nothing—but from the Portuguese! They are Caterina's sonnets!" And so, in half a joke, half a conceit, the famous title was invented.

Animals' Beds.

Many domestic animals are decidedly "faddy" about their beds, and while no one of any species observes a strictly uniform mode of going to rest, there is generally manifested a predilection for some particular spot and for certain surroundings. A writer in the Spectator, London, gives his experience and opinion as follows:

We have seen a little dachshund which would not go to her basket until the blanket had been held to the hall stove. This she required to be done in summer as well as winter, though the stove was not lighted. A spaniel, kept in a stable, used always to leave its kennel to sleep with the horse. Hounds make a joint bed on the bench, after a long run, lying back to back, and so supporting one another. But sporting dogs should have proper beds made like shallow boxes with sloping sides. They are far more rested in the morning than if simply left to lie on straw. This was noted by a clever old Devonshire clergyman, a great sportsman, who observed that his best retrieving spaniel used always to get into an empty wheelbarrow to sleep when tired. The dog's bed should be a rough reproduction of the barrow, without the wheel. The poet Cowper's cat, the "pensive Selima," was not alone in her taste for making a bed in such odd places as watering-pots and open drawers. Cats are the most obstinately capricious, in their fancies about their beds, of any domestic creature. They will follow a particular rug or shawl from room to room, if it be removed, in order to sleep on it, or insist on the use of one chair, until they get their way, and then for some reason take a fancy to another. The cleanliness of all animals, anything newly washed or very fresh and bright, strikes them as just the thing for a bed. A nicely-aired newspaper lying on the floor or in a chair, or linen fresh from the wash, is almost irresistible. Outdoor cats seek a warm as well as a tidy bed. The writer was once much surprised, when passing through a large shipbuilding yard, to see a cat fast asleep, lying, it seemed, on a muddy path. But the spot which the cat had selected for its couch was one at which a hot steam-pipe passed under the road, and the mud was there baked into a warm, dry cake, which made not only a clean but an artificially heated sleeping-place. But the oddest taste in beds developed by a cat was that entertained by a very highly bred gray Angora, which was justly petted and

admired by the family in which it lived. For months it would only sleep in or upon a hat, if such could be found, ladies' hats being preferred. If it could discover one with the inside uppermost, it would lie inside it. If not, such was its love for this form of couch it would curl itself round the brim, and with its long furry tail and pliant body made a fine winter trimming to a summer hat. By some accident, a drawer in which all the 'summer' hats had been disposed for the winter was left open for some days, after which it was discovered that all the hats had been tried in turn, the cat having finally selected one adorned with white laburnum flowers, which never recovered from the 'ironing' to which it had been subjected. Even the animals of the farm have certain preferences in their sleeping arrangements. Cattle and sheep, when left out to 'lie rough,' always sleep under trees to avoid the dew; and sheep, if there is no such cover available, lie on the highest, and consequently the driest, ground. Horses seem less particular, though they have curious fancies as to their bed-litter in stables. It would be interesting to know what is the horse's point of view as to the substitution of 'moss-litter' for straw, which the rise in the price of the latter has brought into such general use. But perhaps the harder animals are right. A rise in the 'standard of comfort' is not an unmixed blessing even to their owners.

A Self-Evident Moral.

(Chicago Daily Herald.)

On the day of "peace and good will" there was an extraordinary number of brutal crimes. Chicago had its full share. In a saloon Edward Morgan, already frenzied by drink, shot and killed Patrick Lynch for refusing to drink with him. In another saloon James Smith shot and killed William Padden in a drunken quarrel. John B. Sleeth, drunk, was found shot in a street near a saloon. Harry Whitlock stabbed George W. Regan in consequence of a quarrel in a saloon. John Dwyer is in the county hospital suffering with wounds received from drunken roughs. Peter Ray, drunk, attacked his wife at their home and shot Richard Walsh, who tried to protect her. Edward Hart is in a hospital suffering with scalp wounds inflicted by drunken companions.

At Arcadia, Fla., a drunken policeman shot and killed John Haygood in a saloon. At West Palm Beach, Letta Dickson, drunk, cut the throat of Josephine Johnson. At Morehead, Ky., Henry Tyree and William Cole, while drunk, attacked Jacob Whitaker and were killed by him in self-defense. At Union, S. C., Kent Gregory and Jack Crawford, both drunk, engaged in a fight. One is dead; the other will die. At St. Joseph, Mo., William Mense, drunk, killed Frank Tracy. At Atlanta, Ga., in a drunken quarrel, John Coleman was killed. At Jackson, Tenn., a drunken dispute caused Samuel Hays to kill Will Alston. At Kansas City, Gustaf Constallutic killed Gabriel Spinola in a drunken fight.

These are only a few of the tragedies of Christmas Day in the United States. All are attributable to a single cause. The enemy men put in their mouths had many victories on the day of peace and good will.

Amusing Mixed Metaphors.

A certain politician, lately condemning the British Government for its recent policy concerning the income tax, is reported to have said: "They'll keep cutting the wool off the sheep that lays the golden eggs until they pump it dry."

"The glorious work will never be accomplished until the good ship 'Temperance' shall sail from one end of the land to the other, and with a cry of 'Victory!' at each step she takes, shall plant her banner in every city, town and village in the United Kingdom."

An Irishman, in the midst of a tirade against landlords and capitalists, declared that "if these men were landed on an uninhabited island, they wouldn't be there half an hour before they would have their hands in the pockets of the naked savages."

Only a few weeks ago, a lecturer at a big meeting gave utterance to the following: "All along the untrodden paths of the future we can see the hidden footprints of an unseen hand."

"We pursue the shadow, the bubble bursts and leaves the ashes in our hands!"

One of the regulations of the West Boston Bridge Company reads: "And the said proprietors shall meet annually on the first Tuesday of June, provided the same does not fall on a Sunday."

An orator at one of the university unions bore off the palm of merit when he declared that "the British lion, whether it is roaming the deserts of India or climbing the forests of Canada, will not draw in its horns nor retire into its shell."

Mr. T. J. Humes, Columbus, Ohio, writes: "I have been afflicted for some time with Kidney and Liver Complaint, and find Parnell's Pills the best medicine for these diseases." These Pills do not cause pain or griping, and should be used when a cathartic is required. They are gelatine coated, and rolled in the flour of licorice to preserve their purity, and give them a pleasant, agreeable taste.

How Some Women Care for Clothes.

She looks as though she had stepped out of a bandbox. How often this remark is heard! and yet not heard often enough to please those very fastidious people who would have us believe that cleanliness and neatness are next to godliness, if not a step beyond.

In these fin de siècle days it is certainly every woman's duty to look neat and clean, but the art of looking what the English call "fit," which word we are rapidly adding to our vocabulary, does not come naturally, and I think, indeed, it would be difficult for any woman to attain to it quite by herself.

One of the best-gowned women I know, and one who is extremely capable in all respects, told me quite seriously the other day that she found it absolutely necessary to keep two maids whose duties were to see that every detail of her toilette was in perfect order. In the new houses where expense is not considered, and one can consult one's own taste, there is much more provision for closet room than was ever thought of a few years since. The entire third floor of a corner house on Fifth avenue, to my personal observation, has been given over to one lady's clothes. Every separate gown, when it is taken off, is thoroughly brushed, looked over to see that not a stitch is ripped, not a button, hook, or string missing. It is then carefully folded by the two maids, who between the folds lay tissue-paper. When the entire gown is folded it is covered with more tissue-paper, put in a fine linen cloth, and tied up with broad ribbons so that it looks as though it had just come home from Worth, Doucet, or some other of the leading French costumers. Between the tissue-paper and the folds of the gown are laid flat sachets filled with orris and violet powder.

The closets are in some houses the size of small rooms, each with a series of three deep drawers built along the walls, above which are three shelves with doors in front of them. The skirts of the short gowns are laid in these drawers. The waists, with sleeves held out with stiff paper, are covered with soft tissue-paper, tied with colored tapes, and kept on the shelves.

The hanging closets are marvelous places; in the ceilings are fastened numberless double hooks, so arranged that long gowns can be hung up and not have their trains touch the floor. The gowns are always hung up with the right side turned out, and are then covered with a bag of linen, which is tied at the bottom and top with drawing-strings. This covering is to prevent any particles of dust getting in the rich fabrics.

One closet is set apart for under-clothing. In one drawer are put the flannel petticoats, in another the street white petticoats, in a third some other article, etc. One entire set of shelves is devoted to the other pieces of dainty lingerie, which are folded as in the French shops—so many of each article together, all tied with ribbons. When returned from the laundry or cleaner's the last articles are put on the bottom of each pile, so that no one garment shall be worn oftener than another.

A deep drawer is provided exclusively for stockings, and those very mundane things look anything but mundane when arranged in rows, the pretty colorings having a bright and dainty effect that it would scarcely seem possible stockings could have.

Boots and shoes are as much care to the maids as is any other part of the wardrobe. They are kept in a closet especially built for them, and are always put on wooden trees as soon as they are taken off the foot, that there shall be no danger of the shoe losing its shape. The shoes are every day brushed, rubbed, and polished, so there is no excuse for any woman not being what the French call *bien chaussée*—a term which conveys more than the mere fact of a well-fitting boot or shoe. It is only within the past year or two that Frenchmen have been willing to admit that any American could with right have the term applied to her feet, because rarely, if ever, was the footwear in the perfect order to warrant it.

So that there shall be no unnecessary handling of the gowns, each one has a card indicating what it is, tied in with the ribbons; for instance, "Madame's gray cloth costume"; "Madame's blue velvet dinner gown."

The lingerie in the same way is designated, but with the addition of a date to show when each particular set was first ordered—"Madame's linen Valenciennes night-robe, No. 3, '94." By this apparently needless expenditure of care and method does the American woman in our "smart set" keep the indescribably fresh and trim appearance people are beginning to acknowledge is a natural characteristic trait.

She who has but five gowns, and has them in perfect order, will invariably be called better dressed than she who with five times that number pays no heed to the thousand and one little details which apparently are hidden.—[Harper's Bazar.]

Bobbie states that he will not give his father a Christmas present this year, because when he poured a bottle of ink into his father's stocking last Christmas, even though his father writes for a living, the old gentleman wasn't pleased a bit.

Too Emotional.

Col. T. W. Higginson does not think that women are after all any more emotional than men. In Harper's Bazar he discusses the question as follows:

Undoubtedly among women the mere expression of emotion is readier than among men. The fountain of tears, especially, lies a little nearer. It is a matter of temperament; the woman has a fit of crying, gets over it, and is stronger and more resolute afterwards. The man, for want of tears, has a dry, hard grief, which does not clear his sky. The question is not whether a woman cries, but what she does after she has dried her tears. The general testimony of those who have gone through shipwrecks and great disasters is that women do not behave as they are expected to do, but show as much self-control as the men. This was the testimony of the surgeon on an ocean steamer, who had several times been shipwrecked, and gave it to me as his experience that women behaved even better. He was never tired of telling the story of one woman whom he was sent below to notify that they must take to the boats after an accident. He found her sitting quietly in the cabin, with her children round her, telling them a story to keep them quiet. Each was already dressed in its warmest clothes, tightly buttoned and tied about, ready to go, and by her side was a pillow-case, filled with ship-bread, carefully secured. She afterwards told him that she had been shipwrecked once before, when a whole boat's crew was kept alive by just such a supply of provision—something which nobody but herself had remembered to provide. The traditional Boston lady who, when the vessel had shipped a heavy sea, was heard only to remark, "Where are my India-rubbers?" was probably of the same temperament.

Dickens, a keen observer, makes his women less and less visibly emotional in proportion as they are in deadly earnest. Miss Miggs, in the London No-Popery riots, goes into hysterics and kicks her heels because her feelings are not very much enlisted; but his terrible French woman, in the French Revolution, goes on knitting, knitting, until the time is fulfilled and the day of her revenge has come. Of all the men and women of that period, the one who left the calmest and most dispassionate picture of events was Madame Roland, of whom a companion said, "She kills us, but she shows us how to die." In the various reforms in which women have taken a hand in this country during the last half-century they have not proved themselves to be too emotional, but clear-headed, capable, and strong, such women, for instance, as Lucretia Mott, Maria Weston Chapman, and Lucy Stone. Nobody attributed too much emotion to Florence Nightingale in the Crimea, or to Clara Barton in our own civil war. It may be said that these were exceptional persons; they were the natural leaders of their sex; but so were the men with whom they co-operated, and in whose presence they held their own. Even in the family, when the husband goes home with a heavy heart to announce his failure in business and the seeming ruin of the household, is his wife usually too emotional to bear it, or does she give him strength? Once when the writer said to a veteran physician in such a case, "How splendidly she meets adversity!" he replied, briefly, "Women always do." Not that there were not exceptions, but that this was his general experience.

Red, White, Green Seas.

The colors of pure ocean water and the varying shades observed where impurities are met with are still further diversified by the coloring effects of the enormous multitudes of various forms of organized life which sometimes mask the natural color of the sea and time extensive areas with remarkable colors. Red appears to be most frequently met with. In the southern parts of the Red Sea and in the Arabian Gulf large areas are colored blood-red by microscopic animalcules, and in the Indian Ocean similar forms of life cause, in addition to red, milk-white or yellow spots of great extent, the appearance of which is frequently alarming to the ignorant sailor.

Off the Guinea coast ships sometimes appear to float in milk. Extensive red streaks are also known to occur in the South Atlantic and South Pacific, which are caused by hosts of small red crustacea. The "Vermillion Sea" of California owes its brilliant color to infusoria. Areas colored green have been noted, especially in the Arctic regions, which are due to myriads of diatoms, and in some portions of the Antarctic seas diatoms of rusty color make the water a dirty brown.—[All the Year Round.]

Sound Advice.

A contemporary tells the following story: "An elderly gentleman, accustomed to 'indulge,' entered the room of a certain inn, where sat a sedate old Quaker by the fire. Lifting a pair of green spectacles up to his forehead, rubbing his inflamed eyes, and calling for hot brandy and water, he complained to the Friend that his eyes were getting weaker and weaker, and the spectacles did not seem to do them any good. 'I'll tell thee, friend,' replied the Quaker, 'what I think. If thee were to wear the spectacles over thy mouth for a few months thy eyes would soon get well again.'"

An Amateur Chaplain's Way.

General Booth tells a story of how the consolations of religion were administered in one of Her Majesty's prisons: "What! Hawkins dead?" exclaimed the chaplain to the warden on entering the prison and learning that an inmate had expired; "why did you not acquaint me?" "Well, sir, 'twere midnight," stolidly replied the official, "and I didn't like to disturb you; but I managed it all right. 'Orkins,' says I, 'you've been a bad 'un.' 'Yes,' says he. 'Orkins, you can't expect to go to 'ev'n.' 'No,' says he. 'Then, Orkins,' says I, 'you must go to the other place.' 'Yes,' says he. 'And, oh, Orkins,' says I, 'how thankful you ought to be to have anywhere to go to at all.'"

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